

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

CHILD CARE WORKERS

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INTEREST AREA
SOCIAL SERVICE



WHAT DOES A CHILD CARE WORKER DO?

CHILD CARE WORKERS take care of babies, young children, and older children, usually while the children's parents or guardians are at work or away for other reasons. They work individually with one child or with groups of children to create a safe, comfortable, and creative environment in which children can mature and learn. Generally the children are under the age of six, however, an increasing number of school age children require before and/or after school child care while their parents work.

Child Care Workers are found in family day care homes, child care centers, preschools, elementary schools, group homes, and in private residences. Other job titles for these workers include Child Care Aides, Teaching Assistants, Instructional Aides, Nursery Aides, and Nannies.

In formal day care centers, Child Care Workers are sometimes assistants to pre-school teachers and are always under the direction of a day care director.

Tasks of Child Care Workers include the following:

- Make sure children are safe and have good behavior.
- Arrange and take part in indoor and outdoor play.
- Change diapers of infants and toddlers, following proper health guidelines. May change diapers of older children who may have special needs.
- Read to children and teach simple painting, drawing, games, hand work, and songs.
- Teach children to share and to be giving, patient, and understanding of others.
- Assist in preparing and serving meals and drinks to children.
- Correct children when needed, following rules of day care center and/or parents.
- Encourage children to care for and pick up toys, books, and clothing.
- Teach children about good health and personal habits, such as eating, resting, and toilet habits.
- Supervise rest periods and change sheets on cribs or cots when needed.
- Make sure school age children complete homework.
- Wash and sanitize toys and play equipment.
- Keep records of child's progress and discuss child's needs with guardians.
- Watch children with special medical needs and call for medical assistance when needed.

- Place or lift children into baths or pools.
- Make sure supplies are ready for scheduled activities and that toys and other play things are put away.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Some of the important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Child Care Workers include:

- Speaking – Talking to others to effectively convey information.
- Service – Actively looking for ways to help people.
- Listening – Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
- Instructing – Teaching others how to do something.
- Monitoring – Assessing how well one is doing when learning or doing something.
- Learning Strategies – Using multiple approaches when learning or teaching new things.
- Problem Identification – Identifying the nature of problems.
- Oral Expression – The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
- Problem Sensitivity – The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

The primary interest of most people who like being Child Care Workers include:

- Social – People with Social interests like work activities that assist others and promote learning and personal development. They prefer to communicate more than work with objects, machines, or data. They like to teach, to give advice, to help, or otherwise be of service to people.
- Artistic – People with Artistic interests like work activities that deal with the artistic side of things, such as forms, designs, and patterns. They like self-expression in their work. They prefer settings where work can be done without following a clear set of rules.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Child care centers range from large well-equipped buildings with large inside and outside play areas to small private homes. Working with children involves extensive physical activity, mental alertness, and enthusiasm. Good general health, physical stamina and emotional stability are essential. The work is never routine, with each day marked by new activities and challenges. Child care requires bending, stooping, and lifting as workers attend to each child's interest and problems. The environment is often noisy and workers occasionally have to contend with unpleasant odors.

Union Membership

So far, there has been little or no unionization of Child Care Workers in California.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division:

Estimated number of workers in 1998:	37,700
Estimated number of workers in 2008:	50,600
Projected Growth 1998-2008:	34.2%
Est. openings due to separations by 2008:	4,300
<i>These figures do not include self-employment.</i>	

The number of Child Care Workers is projected to increase faster than average for all occupations through the year 2008. Between 1990 and 1998, the number of Child Care Workers working in California more than doubled, growing from 17,890 to 37,700 workers.

Trends

In California the number of children under the age of five is expected to increase 14 percent between the years 2000 and 2010, according to the California Census Bureau. Additionally, parents are turning to formal child care arrangements for a variety of reasons: they may need two incomes; they may find it too difficult to set up a satisfactory arrangement with a relative, or they may prefer a more structured learning and social environment.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Child Care Workers 2001 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$7.09	to	\$10.80
Average hourly wage	\$9.18		
Average annual wage	\$19,107		

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers* by EDD/LMID.

Hours

The working hours of Child Care Workers vary widely. Family day care providers have flexible hours and daily routines, but may work long or unusual hours to fit parents' work schedules. Formal day care programs employ both full-time and part-time workers with staggered shifts to cover the entire day.

Benefits

Benefits for these workers also vary. Many employers offer free or discounted day care to employees. Some offer medical, dental, and vacation benefits, but others offer no benefits at all. A few are willing to cover the costs of early childhood education courses taken at community colleges or adult education schools.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

Child care centers are subject to the California Department of Social Services licensing regulations. All workers must be in good health and have criminal record clearance, including fingerprinting. Those who work in infant centers (children under two years of age) must be high school graduates or be enrolled in a course leading to completion of high school, or have demonstrated through experience a capability for learning the job. Some experience in caring for children is also necessary. For those who work with children over two years of age, the State regulations require applicant be at least 18 years of age, or if the applicant is not yet 18, then high school graduation or enrollment in an occupational training program is needed.

Child care center directors also look for knowledge of early childhood development, knowledge of child guidance principles and practices and ability to work harmoniously with children, parents, and staff members. Many employers prefer that applicants possess an Early Childhood Education certificate (12 credits), available through most community colleges.

Employers generally require the ability to interact well with others and a good work record. Some require bilingual skills (usually English/Spanish) and the ability to work well under pressure. Health screening, including a chest x-ray, is required.

Licensing and Certification

California has no licensure or certification requirement for Child Care Aides. Those who want to work as day care teachers can receive a Children's Center Instructional Permit, issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, after they complete 24 hours of early childhood education courses and 16 credits toward a bachelor's degree. Emergency instructional permits can be granted to Aides who have completed 12 hours of early childhood education courses, and have a minimum of two years children's center experience, when critical teacher shortages occur.

Some employers do require workers to take a First Aid course or earn a Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certificate, and many will finance the cost of the course.

Continuing Education

Continuing education is not usually required to maintain a position as a Child Care Worker.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Child Care Workers should apply directly to nursery schools, preschools, and local public schools. The California Child Care Resource and Referral Network is represented by an agency in practically every county and is a source of job openings information. Contact the California Department of Social Services for the nearest

referral agency (see Other Sources of Information below).

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Child Care Centers. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

In child care centers, the Aide position is usually the entry job. With additional education and work experience, Aides can promote to Teacher, Head Teacher, and finally Director.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

California Department of Social Services
Community Care Licensing Division
744 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 229-4500
<http://ccld.ca.gov/docs/maps/c4f.htm>

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Teachers, Preschool	No. 275
Private Household Workers	No. 395
Teacher Aides	No. 502

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)

Child Care Workers	39-9011
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O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)

Child Care Workers	39-9011.00
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OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)

Child Care Workers	68038
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DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)

Child-Care Attendant, School	355.674-010
Nursery School Attendant	359.677-018
Playroom Attendant	359.677-026